

Congressman Pence wrote the following open letter to Jack Kemp that [was published](#) in the *Washington Times* today:

*Along with millions of Americans, I was troubled to learn of your diagnosis of cancer and have been praying for your recovery every day. Because I am among those who have followed you as chairman of the House Republican Conference, I thought it would be appropriate to pass along a few thoughts on what you have meant to me and legions of Republicans for the past 30 years.*

*I began my political life as a Democrat, and it wasn't until the election of President Reagan that I became a Republican. In the years that followed, apart from Mr. Reagan, no one personified my vision of what it means to be a Republican more than you.*

*Your optimistic belief in the American dream - in the power of free markets and entrepreneurial capitalism - was a lodestar to my nascent political career. Your devotion to ensuring equality of opportunity for every American regardless of race, creed or color helped ground me in the true ideals of the party of Lincoln. Finally, your integrity and personal Christian faith showed how to build a career in public service without compromising the people and the values that matter most.*

*When you emerged on the national scene in the 1970s, your quarterback's enthusiasm and idealism about America were contagious, and millions of us caught the bug. As both a legislator and a thought leader, you shaped a generation of rising leaders of both parties with your ideas about entrepreneurial capitalism, enterprise zones and equality. Those ideas also shaped the development of tax policy under Mr. Reagan and welfare reform in the Congress led by House Speaker Newt Gingrich.*

*You may recall that I told you once that I could "never envision a future in America where Jack Kemp wasn't eventually president of the United States" - and I still can't.*

*But maybe I was off the mark. Maybe I was aiming too low.*

*On occasion, there are giants among us - men like Benjamin Franklin, William Wilberforce and Booker T. Washington - who never held the highest elective office in the land but shaped their times by strong moral persuasion and political activism. Jack, I believe you are such a man.*

*My admiration and respect for you are boundless. The debt this nation owes you can only be repaid by imitation of your example. You will remain in my prayers, and I will always be proud to call you a friend and to say that I am, first and foremost, a "Jack Kemp Republican."*

REP. MIKE PENCE  
Chairman

## **Open Letter to Jack Kemp**

Tuesday, 17 February 2009 20:00

---

House Republican Conference  
Washington